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## REVIEWS AND NOTES.

## NOTE.

A Division of Statistical Research was organized in the New York City Health Department within the Bureau of Records on June 1, 1915. The creation of such a division has long been contemplated by the Department and repeatedly recommended by special committees.

It is hoped that the new division will justify its existence from the start and thus secure a reasonable amount of support in the next budget. The new division hopes to take over the statistical work of the different bureaus of the department and in this way to secure a saving of labor that can be devoted to the development of the department's statistics. The division will then be able to supply the bureaus of the department with scientific data to guide them in their different fields of health work.

The new division has been organized entirely without additional cost to the city by detailing qualified workers from within the department. Shirley W. Wynne, M.D., Assistant Registrar, Manhattan, has been designated Chief of the new division.

L. I. D.

## STATISTICS OF SUICIDE IN SPAIN AND SAXONY.

Under the caption, "*Zur Statistik des Selbstmords*," the *Deutsches Statistisches Zentralblatt*\* discusses recent publications on suicide statistics in Spain and in the Kingdom of Saxony.

Spanish suicide statistics, in spite of their detail of presentation, have hitherto obtained but little notice. They were formerly grouped with the general statistics of mortality, but were made the subject of special enumeration by a royal decree of September 8, 1906. As suicide still entails certain legal consequences in Spain, the lower courts were entrusted with the filling out of a questionnaire for every suicide and attempted suicide, and were instructed to send these questionnaires, at the end of every quarter, to the Geographical and Statistical Institute for compilation. These forms do not contain the names of suicides. They record nationality, home, temporary or permanent character of stay in locality, literacy, manner of committing suicide (9 titles), and cause of suicide (13 titles).

The first comprehensive compilation for Spain has appeared under the title, "*Estadística de Suicidio en España*" (Madrid, 1913) for 1906-1911. It analyzes the material by years, provinces and large cities, age, conjugal condition, time of suicide, etc. Of course the criminal nature of the act in Spain is certain to have made the figures too low. The tables are accompanied by comparisons with other European countries. It appears that, during the period of observation, there were 74 suicides and attempted

\* Vol. II, No. 1. Leipzig, January, 1915.

suicides per million population. It is noteworthy that these cases occurred, for the most part, among persons of the higher cultural grades.

Suicides occurring in Saxony since 1830 are discussed by Dr. Georg Radestock in the *Zeitschrift des Königlich-Sächsischen Statistischen Landesamtes*, 1913, No. 2, p. 275 ff. He depicts the evolution of suicide statistics and of the methods of enumerating them. Reliable data are obtained by means of a comparison of police reports with registry office mortality records. Of course a certain percentage of false reports by physicians must be reckoned with.

In the recent figures it may be pointed out that suicide is the second cause of death, with respect to frequency, among men aged 15-29; it is exceeded only by tuberculosis. It is third in order of frequency among men aged 30-39. It is almost twice as frequent at ages 30-59 as at ages 15-29. If these figures are accurate, then the incidence of suicide in Saxony is much higher than it is in the Registration Area of the United States, where suicide ranks seventh in the list of causes of death among males in age period 15-29 and sixth in age period 30-39. In the Industrial mortality experience of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, suicide in the first age period ranks eighth and in the second age period ranks fifth.

The author points out that city dwellers usually seek rural surroundings to commit suicide, and discusses the influence of the time of day and of the day of the week; Saxony is perhaps unique in studying the bearing of these factors upon the question. In 1911 most of the suicides occurred on Saturday, in contrast to the predominant occurrence of fatal accidents on Monday. Enumeration by occupation brought interesting results. Analysis by religious confession was incomplete, but steps are being taken to remedy this defect.

O. Kürten has treated the same subject in "*Statistik des Selbstmordes im Königreich Sachsen*," appearing as Supplement No. 3 of the *Deutsches Statistisches Zentralblatt*. He devotes himself rather to the general bearings of the subject than to its many detailed aspects. Among the interesting points, however, which he brings to light, is the fact that suicide attains its greatest frequency, not in large cities, but in towns of 16,000-25,000 inhabitants. He is skeptical with regard to studies of the correlation of suicide with criminality, food-prices, economic and political crises, etc.

LOUIS I. DUBLIN.

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*Manual for Health Officers.* By J. Scott MacNutt. Published by John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1915. Cloth, \$3.00.

This volume is a useful addition to the equipment of American public health officials. The author is to be congratulated on a work which so completely puts at the disposal of health workers the best thought and practise in their important field. The point of view is at once comprehensive and radical, as might be expected from Mr. MacNutt whose admin-